

Sycamore Watershed Public Forum

City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division

October 26, 2004

Prepared by:



Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc. | 800 Hearst Avenue | Berkeley, CA
94710

November 2004

INTRODUCTION

On Tuesday, October 26, 2004, the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division held a public forum to gain public insight regarding the development of a **Sycamore Watershed Action Plan**. The public forum was held at the Santa Barbara Eastside Public Library, 1102 East Montecito Street in Santa Barbara, California. There were approximately four city staff, three consultants, and ten members of the public present. The meeting was videotaped for later broadcast on community television and a live translation into Spanish was provided.

The public forum was one in a series of public meetings the Santa Barbara Creeks Division conducted as part of a preliminary planning effort to create a compelling vision and action plan for healthy Santa Barbara watersheds, specifically the Sycamore, Arroyo Burro and Mission Creek watersheds. A public forum was held for each watershed with the purpose of determining the community planning priorities within each watershed.

Daniel Iacofano, of Moore Iacofano Goltsman, (MIG) Inc. facilitated the forum. Jill Zachary of the Creeks Division provided background information and maps of the watershed and described some of City's activities to improve water quality within Santa Barbara. Paul Curfman, also of MIG, presented a framework of eight (8) components for evaluating and improving watershed health. (That presentation is available at www.sbcreeks.com). Those eight components were previously developed by the Technical Advisory Group for the Creeks Division as a framework for healthy watersheds and include:

1. **Clean Up and Trash Removal**
2. **Improved Water Quality**
3. **Erosion and Sediment Control**
4. **Terrestrial Habitat Enhancement**
5. **Aquatic Habitat Enhancement**
6. **Water Management**
7. **Public Natural/Recreation Areas**
8. **Increased Public Awareness**

About this Report and the Watershed Action Planning Process

This report summarizes the community's expressed interests regarding the eight components of a healthy watershed, particularly in reference to the Sycamore Watershed. This information, in conjunction with the scientific evaluations now underway, will be used to form the community's vision for improvements within the watershed. By Summer of 2005 the watershed evaluations will be completed and the City will begin a comprehensive visioning process where there will be more opportunities for community input. After the community vision becomes more focused in late 2005 the Watershed Action Plans will be developed through 2006. By early 2007 the Watershed Action Plans should be completed.

SYCAMORE WATERSHED- SUMMARY OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The eight components of watershed health became the organizational structure for the evening's discussions about the Sycamore Watershed. Community members identified issues and challenges as well as developed strategies regarding a healthy watershed. The comments below summarize the group discussion as well as the written comments received on distributed comment cards.

Clean-up and Trash Removal

Questions

- Are there scheduled clean-ups every week at a Sycamore location?
 - ↳ The City routinely cleans the creek beds and does respond to calls
 - ↳ Contact 897-2658 for more information on scheduled clean-ups

Strategies

- Trim trees while leaving bush in Parma Park
- Initiate creek stabilization program involving homeowners
- Establish a volunteer clean-up program
- Post "No Dumping" signage
- Coordinate clean-up with County Flood Control efforts
- Remove Arundo (and other invasive species)
 - Determine costs and impacts (especially impacts on egrets and night herons)

Additional Comments

- Sycamore Creek held its banks in last big storm

Improved Water Quality

Questions

- Is there a study we can conduct to determine human markers regarding bacteria?
 - ↳ There is a DNA test which the City is evaluating for applicability

Strategies

- Determine the source of bacteria
- Conduct a sewer study
- Address bacteria coming from:
 - Lawns and pet waste
 - Sewage overflow
- Develop a plan for managing storm water runoff
- Establish "Stream Keepers" program
- Identify faulty sewage pipes by conducting home sale inspections
 - There is a City proposal to require inspection of sewer laterals at the time of sale
 - There is a newspaper article regarding proposal worth available for public review

- Board of Realtors does not support the proposal

Erosion & Sediment Control

Strategies

- Determine what is happening with erosion (3-4' down-cutting of creek bed observed over 30 years)
- Implement bank repair (questions as to how best approach this)
- Use native plants, such as Sycamore trees and willows to hold banks

Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitat Enhancement

Questions

- Where did the coots go?

Strategies

- Maintain private property rights!
- Provide incentives to encourage property owners to do the right thing!
 - Provide incentives for planting native plants
 - Provide incentives for paving surfaces with permeable materials
 - Reduce or limit new development (Proposals for new affordable housing compete with goal of reducing impervious surfaces)

Water Management

Strategies

- Address sewage spills

Public Natural/Recreation Areas

Increased Public Awareness

Strategies

- Initiate school based creek-related educational programs

Overall

- Provide more enforcement!

Water Quality

- Determine the source of bacteria?
- Bacteria [from]:
 - Lawns
 - Sewage overflow
- Storm water runoff management

Erosion

- Figure out what is happening with Erosion?
- Bank repair
- Use Sycamore's...

Habitat

- Where did the coots go?

Water Management

Public Natural Area

Public Recreation

- Maintain private property rights!!

Public Awareness

- School based programs

Clean-up/Trash, Pick-up

- Parma Park
- Bridges, etc.

Overall Strategies

- Provide incentives to encourage property owners to do the right thing!
 - Reduce or limit new development
 - ↳ New affordable housing competes with the goal of improving watershed
 - Potential inspection program?
- Provide more enforcement!